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ABSTRACT

Recent years have witnessed an accumulating volume of research in the areas of classroom management, parent training, teacher training, and training of paraprofessionals. While much of this research has demonstrated significant results experimentally, many of these approaches have yet to be adopted as part of the counseling and personnel services in school settings. The question still remains as to whether these programs can be successfully employed in schools, at low cost, with minimal disruptions to present curriculum and school personnel. The present paper is a description of an on-going comprehensive program combining a classroom cooperation project with parent training, teacher training, teacher-aide training, and the use of trained volunteers, all in a concerted effort to increase cooperative behavior in six elementary school classrooms. The utility of a program providing a network of coordinated services is as follows: (1) low-cost direct services to parents, children and school personnel; (2) effective use of community resources by training paraprofessionals to work with children and provide support for parents and teachers; and (3) minimal disruption to on-going classroom curricula by providing teachers with the extra person power necessary to increase cooperation in the classroom. (Author)

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# Isla Vista Elementary School-Home Cooperation Project

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## Isla Vista Elementary School-Home Cooperation Project[1]

In recent years a surge of applied behavioral research has accumulated in the areas of: Classroom management (O'Leary, 1972); Parent training (O'Dell, 1974); Teacher training (Madsen & Madsen, 1976); and Training of paraprofessionals (Suinn, 1974), all in an effort to bring about specific behavioral changes in the home and/or school environments of children. While many of these approaches have demonstrated significant results experimentally (i.e., under controlled or semi-controlled conditions), early proclamations of these procedures as the most pragmatic and expedient methods for effective child guidance, still remain a promise as yet unfulfilled. Assuming these techniques to be effective in bringing about desired changes empirically, can these interventions be employed in a school setting, at a low cost, with minimal disruptions to present curriculum and school personnel?

The present paper is a description of an on-going comprehensive program combining a classroom cooperation project with parent training, teacher training, teacher-aide training, and the use of trained volunteers, in a concerted effort to increase cooperative behavior in six (first through sixth grade) elementary school classrooms.[2] The parent, teacher, and

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1. This is a summary of a paper presented at the April, 1977 Convention of the Western Psychological Association, Seattle, Washington. A detailed report with documentation is in preparation.

2. This project is supported with Title I funds through a contract with Goleta Union School and Social Advocates for Youth, Goleta, California.

teacher-aide groups focus training on child guidance skills via the application of social learning principles. The classroom cooperation project involves a series of exercises stressing student's cooperation with their peers and the teacher, while undergraduates from the University are trained to implement interventions designed to increase primary academic skills (e.g., attending to instructions).

The utility of a program providing a network of coordinated services are as follows: 1) low-cost direct services to parents, children and school personnel; 2) effective use of community resources by training paraprofessionals to work with children and provide support for parents and teachers; and 3) minimal disruption to regular classroom curricula, by providing teachers with the extra "person power" necessary to increase cooperation in the classroom.

The high cost of professional services coupled with the impractical use of rigorous experimental designs which impede normal classroom functions, point to the necessity of an effective low-cost, viable approach to child guidance. The School-Home Cooperation Project offers one such approach, which combines the systematic results of experimental research with the practical concerns of school personnel. What follows is a more complete description of the six components involved in the project.[1]

Classroom Cooperation Project

The classroom cooperation project meets in small groups of children over a 10-13 week period, during which time the children learn what cooperation means and how they can cooperate at home, in class and on the playground. The general format for these groups involves a presentation of

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1. For more information concerning the actual agenda's for the training programs, write Dean S. Janoff, University of California, Santa Barbara, Department of Education.

material, a group discussion, followed by a classroom exercise demonstrating cooperation. Later in the project the children are allowed to earn points for cooperative behavior which are in turn traded in for a patch, stickers, or small tablets of paper. Cooperative behavior is generally defined as being "on-task." This included sitting in one's seat, being quiet, working on the assigned task, and reading a book or playing a game quietly with someone else when the assigned task is completed. Points could also be earned by engaging in sharing and helping behaviors. Verbal praise is also given with points; comments such as, "You're certainly working hard," and I'm glad to see that you are sharing," are frequently made.

Upon conclusion of the classroom project, teachers are provided with a series of exercises to facilitate cooperative behavior in an attempt to maintain changes in desirable behavior.

Parent Education and Training Program

The parent education and training program integrates individual contact with parents and group meetings.

Parent Training Groups: Parents are grouped on the basis of age categories of their children and problem behaviors presented by their children (e.g., hyperactivity, agressiveness, socially withdrawn, etc.). Eight to twelve parents then participate in 7 weekly group meetings designed to systematically educate and train them in the principles and procedures of effective child guidance. This procedure actively involves the parent in a learning process designed to help them understand how problem behaviors are learned and how they can be changed. Parent training materials are provided for the members of this group which explain basic concepts of child guidance. Assigned readings and other homework increases parent's knowledge and

understanding of the concepts presented in the group.

Individual contact with parents: Over a period of 10 weeks, parents meet individually with a staff member to discuss the types of problems confronted in the family. During this time, an effort is made to apply principles learned from the group in an individualized intervention program developed and implemented in the home.

Teacher Education Workshops

Similar to the parent program, teacher education workshops are based on experimental research, principles and procedures of effective child management and guidance in the classroom. The goals of the program are to train teachers to identify and define classroom problems and classroom goals, to design and implement a behavioral program to reduce problem behavior, to train teachers in effective procedures to increase classroom cooperation, to assist teachers in developing and improving their skills in communication with the children, and in acquiring problem-solving skills to apply to the classroom.

Individual contact: Over the period of the school year, teachers meet individually with a staff member to discuss the types of problems confronted in the classroom. During this time, individualized and group intervention programs are developed and implemented.

Teacher workshops: Six to eight interested teachers meet in a group. The group meets fifteen times over the period of the school year discussing current applied research relating to classroom problems. In addition, teachers are supplied with a training workbook of selected readings and exercises to be used in the classroom.

Teacher-aide Training Program

The thrust of the teacher-aide training program is to train aides in the basic skills necessary to work with children in the classroom setting. Information about the particular age category of the children they are working with is provided in an effort to understand the emotional, intellectual, and developmental tasks which confront their children. In addition, they receive training in applied reinforcement for use in the classroom. Teacher-aides are also assisted in developing realistic goals and expectations for the children, in developing and improving their skills in communicating with the children and in acquiring problem-solving skills to apply in the classroom. Group membership consists of 14-16 aides, and the group meets for 7 weeks.

On-site Classroom Consultant

Throughout the academic school year a staff member is at the elementary school during the day for 8 hours a week. During this time parents, teachers, aides, and children are able to meet and discuss their individual needs and problems. In addition, the staff member observes children in the classroom and develops intervention programs.

Volunteer Involvement: Recruitment, Screening, Training & Supervision

The involvement of trained and supervised volunteers is an essential component of the Cooperation Project. The volunteers are recruited from Practicum courses at two local colleges in the Santa Barbara area, and screened by the two staff members. After screening applicants, 10 are selected to participate in the project. These volunteers receive 20 hours of special training and 50 hours of supervision. After their initial training, volunteers are matched with either a classroom teacher or parent(s) involved in the

project. Each volunteer works at the elementary school or in the home for 3 to 4 hours a week, over a 30 week period.